Cambridgeshire County Council

Jigsaw

Issue 35 - July 2010

Cambridgeshire's childcare and early years magazine

General News

Message from the Head of Early Years and Childcare

"We will all need to continue to work closely together and to be able to demonstrate the impact of what we do."

Dear Colleague

A development day for local authority staff in May provided an opportunity for us to reflect on the range of work in progress around the county in the early years / childcare sector. We have plenty to be proud of. In particular, we looked at our – and your – successes.

The figures speak for themselves. To name but a few, in Cambridgeshire:

- 70% of childminders and 73% of group care settings were judged as 'good' or better at Ofsted inspection.
- There are 33 Early Years Professionals in PVI (private, voluntary and independent sector) settings, and a further 129 practitioners are working towards EYP status.
- 80 settings are engaged in the graduate pathway.
- 22 new play spaces have been created in the past year (33 in total) and a new adventure playground is being built in Wisbech.

The above are just a few of the success stories from around the county. You can read about others in this edition of Jigsaw. These, and other achievements, are even more remarkable set against a backdrop of very rapid national change. At the time of writing, a new coalition government has just come to power and is shaping its budget and its work programme, amidst ongoing financial pressures. This will inevitably mean more change up ahead. To meet whatever challenges the future brings, we will all need to continue to work closely together and to be able to demonstrate the impact of what we do.

By the time you receive Jigsaw, you will hopefully have contributed to a large piece of research that we are required to undertake every three years - our Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. If you did, thank you for your support. You can also help on an ongoing basis by taking part in the termly online sufficiency surveys. The aim of this work is to identify where there are gaps in the childcare market in the county, and plan how to support the market to address these gaps. This can benefit parents and childcare providers alike. You can read more about the termly online surveys on page 31.

In the last edition of Jigsaw, I told you that the Service Director for Learning, Helen Whiter, would be retiring at Easter. We now have news of Helen's successor: Gayle Gorman, who will take up her post in July. Gayle has been working for National Strategies, most recently in the role of Senior Director for Literacy. We are very fortunate to have secured such a high-profile appointment and will benefit from the national overview Gayle will bring to the county.

I hope you will find plenty to interest you in this edition of Jigsaw. As always, we will be happy to hear from you and to receive your feedback.

With very best wishes

Gill Harrison - Head of Early Years and Childcare, Children and Young People's Services

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PLEASE NOTE. The views expressed in 'Jigsaw' are those of individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the local authority. 'Jigsaw' welcomes the views of all providers.

Throughout 'Jigsaw', the term 'parents' is used in a broad sense to refer to parents, carers and anyone with parental responsibility.

General News

Up-to-date Information

It is extremely important that we hold up-to-date information regarding settings, their management and practitioners/staff on our database. Please remember to notify the Childcare Information Service as soon as possible where changes have happened, such as staff leaving or joining, change of contact numbers, role changes, including changes to the lead contact for the committee.

The contact details are: Childcare Information Service Tel: 0845 04 54 014, Email: info@opp-links.org.uk

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Research - What Happens Now?

Many of you will have received calls, either as parents, or as early years and childcare settings, during May and June from research company Morgan's, who are leading on the consultation for Cambridgeshire's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 2010/11.

We'd like to thank you for taking part, as the information you provided helps us to form a picture of childcare supply and demand, and put in place development plans for early years and childcare over the period 2010-2013.

The information Morgan's received will be collated and analysed over the summer months, and a draft report is expected in September. Thereafter we aim to publish the report by January 2011, and at that stage we will share the results widely with providers, and all other interested parties.

Last time we produced locality reports and action plans, to inform early years and childcare development on a very local basis. For more information see: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childcare - and follow the link to 'Childcare Sufficiency Assessment' on the left-hand side.

If you have any comments about how you would like to see the new data and information presented, or if you have any questions about the CSA generally, please contact Sharron Wilding-Glendye or one of the Development Team on 01954 283373.

"We'd like to thank you for taking part, as the information you provided helps us to form a picture of childcare supply and demand."

Home Access Scheme - Free Computers for Low-income Families

'Home Access', is a national scheme that helps low-income families without access to a computer and/or Internet to get online at home. It provides a grant to eligible families enabling them to choose from a range of approved packages. The grant is a significant one and can cover a computer, one year's internet access, service and support. Broadly speaking, families are likely to be eligible if they have a child on free school meals in Key Stage 2 or 3.

Statistics indicate the number of grants awarded in Cambridgeshire is below expectations. Local authority staff have been asked to help boost take up of the scheme by bringing it to the attention of families who may be eligible. We should like to enlist the help of childcare and early years settings also: your work with families makes you well placed to help. If you have contact with families who might be eligible, please let them know about the scheme.

To apply, parents need to phone a call centre and after preliminary screening, an application form is sent to them. For more information, visit the website for the scheme at http://www.homeaccess.org.uk/

General News

New Play Spaces Across Cambridgeshire Open for Play!

"We can only showcase a selection of sites here, but if you get the chance, do make sure to visit these exciting new play spaces."

The capital project to establish new play spaces across the county has reached completion, with all of the new sites constructed over the past two years now open and being enjoyed by children and young people.

Consultation was conducted with these same youngsters at the outset to establish the need for redevelopment and to help choose and create ideal facilities. Thoughts as to what natural play opportunities they would like were also gathered. This has resulted in the creation of 33 innovative and bespoke play spaces.

Cambridge City
A new play space at Cherry Hinton Hall has helped to bring children and young people to a different area of the park, adjacent to the stream, encouraging youngsters to engage safely with water. Bob Hughes, a leading play theorist and practitioner in the UK, has praised this site, including the fearsome-looking spiked maze design.

Elsewhere in Cambridge, Ditton Fields also benefitted from the creation of a new play space from this project's funding.

Fenland
The Gorefield Adventure Patch on the village playing field received project funding. The space that was created as a result has revitalised the site, with a fantastic natural play zone created from a tree trunk, willow tunnel, mounds and large logs, alongside several exciting new pieces of equipment. Further development is set to follow, with a proposed BMX track as well as adult outdoor gym equipment to firmly establish the site as one for the whole community.

Murrow Village Playing Field has seen one of the largest features of the project installed. The Buccaneer Towers stands at over 4m tall, and provides opportunity for children and young people to experience, negotiate and make judgements of height, risk and challenge within a playful environment.

The other play spaces within Fenland to be awarded funding during the project were:

- Wisbech St Mary, Sports and Community Centre
- Wisbech Park, Wisbech
- March, Robingoodfellows Lane

Huntingdonshire
Offords Millennium Green is able to showcase a bespoke, fortresss-like stilt house in its new play area. This sits alongside an inclusive and speedy double-width mound slide, which can be enjoyed by children of all abilities alone or in pairs. The Millennium Green Trust and Parish Council teamed up to host an official opening to remember, with a raffle draw for the first rides on the new zip wire and a cake designed as a scale model of the play space.

Somersham Parish Council opened its new play space on Norwood Playing Fields. The England Ladies Cricket Captain, Charlotte Edwards had the duty of cutting the ribbon, as what seemed like all of the village's children and young people converged on the new facility. A large play tree will be added to provide a defining and creative natural play element.

A further nine play spaces were created within Huntingdonshire during the scheme, located at:

- Folksworth Playing Field
- Godmanchester, Judith's Field
- Hail Weston Playing Field
- Houghton and Wyton Playing Field
- Huntingdon, Garner Court
- Huntingdon, Beech Close
- St Neots, Priory Park
- Warboys, Adam Lyons Recreation Ground
- Wistow, Oaklands Avenue

New Play Spaces ...continued

East Cambridgeshire
Mepal Parish Council conducted exhaustive consultation throughout the village and at the local primary school. This resulted in the creation of their natural led play space on the recreation ground featuring a tree house, pond area, zip wire, nest swing, and water / sand play area. A teddy bears' picnic for the local school children marked the completion of the works and the official launch.
East Cambridgeshire District Council continue in their development of the city's Country Park, but have recently completed the play space. A 3m high mound slide and 6m high space net will provide exciting play opportunities as well. Both make a visual impact on entering the park from Cresswells Lane.

As well as Mepal and Ely, further play spaces funded in East Cambridgeshire as part of the project were:

- Brinkley, Beechcroft
- Coveney, Village Hall Play Area
- Littleport, Parsons Lane
- Swaffham Bulbeck Recreation Ground
- Wentworth, Main Road

South Cambridgeshire
Milton Country Park was developed in the first year and has generated a creative play space at the entrance of the park providing an exciting welcome for young visitors. Den areas and willow structures are also prominent within the space, allowing for children to engage in imaginative play in a very natural environment.

The recreation ground committee from Histon and Impington carried out thorough consultation across both villages in order to ensure their plans reflected the choices of youngsters in the village. A landscape designer translated the ideas into a flowing, undulating play space amongst mounds and natural pathways. A large, sailed seating area provides ample shade and weather protection and a setting for social play.

At Papworth Everard, Ermine Street North, a large exciting play area has been created to surround the 1940's paddling pool still in use today. Large climbing structures, a tower slide, swings and a willow arbour have regenerated the space and provided further reason for visiting this already popular site.

The other South Cambridgeshire sites that were recipients of funding to develop their respective play spaces were:

- Barton Recreation Ground
- Horseheath, Village Hall
- Kingston Recreation Ground
- Longstowe Recreation Ground
- Whaddon, Church Lane

From the photos you can begin to see some of what has been created. Unfortunately we can only showcase a selection of sites here, but if you get the chance, do make sure to visit these exciting new play spaces.

The time, work and effort committed to each of these projects from volunteers, parents, parish councillors, etc, has been vast and quite amazing. All involved should be very proud of what they have been able to achieve for their communities.

Play is recognised as a key element in the development of physical, social, emotional, intellectual and creative skills and qualities of children and young people. It is hoped that families in Cambridgeshire will benefit from the creation of these new play spaces for generations to come.

For any further information with respect to any of the sites or the project please contact Ashley List, County Play Strategy Project Officer 01954 284204 / ashley.list@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

"It is hoped that families in Cambridgeshire will benefit from the creation of these new play spaces for generations to come."

General News

HPA Infection Control Poster for Childcare Settings

"The poster has details of exclusion periods and which conditions are classed as notifiable diseases."

The Health Protection Agency poster that all settings should have for reference was updated in April 2010. Entitled "Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings", the poster has a range of essential information for child carers. This includes details of exclusion periods and which conditions are classed as notifiable diseases.

The new version of the poster can be downloaded from the Health Protection Agency website: www.hpa.org.uk (to find the right page, follow the trail to 'publications>infectious diseases>infection control'). Alternatively, you can order a free copy from your local Health Protection Unit (HPU). The Health Protection Agency website has a postcode search facility for finding the appropriate HPU.

Are You "up to data" Online?

Thanks to those of you who are getting into the swing of uploading your data on a termly basis via the Childcare Information Service (CIS) during NEF headcount week.

We are keen to remind providers that it is a condition of the Local Agreement for Childcare Providers in Cambridgeshire to submit your data to us on a termly basis. The survey is most simply completed online (although it can be completed by post), and it is available on the CIS website along with explanatory notes: **www.familiesandchildcare.org.uk**

The data gathering exercise is now in its third term. If you are still unsure about how to submit information, staff from the CIS are on hand to answer any queries you may have. Please contact the Childcare Information Service on **0845 04 54 014.**

The information is used to inform our ongoing childcare sufficiency plans, which, in turn, enable us to manage the market, helping you sustain, or even expand your business.

Thank you.

Children's Centres

Development Phase Complete!

The final phase of children's centre development in Cambridgeshire is complete, with 13 additional centres now open, giving a total of 40 centres throughout the county.

All Phase 3 centres have been designated[1] and now have two years to ensure they are delivering the full range of services expected of a Sure Start Children's Centre: this is called reaching their 'Full Core Offer' status. This includes:

- Moving into the permanent building solution and having clear information on opening hours.
- Information and advice to carers on a range of subjects, including local childcare, early years provision (integrated full daycare and early learning) and education services for three and four-year olds.
- Support to childminders via a quality assured, coordinated network, but also to other childminders in the area e.g. providing shared training opportunities, loan of toys and equipment, hosting drop-in sessions.
- Outreach services for isolated parents/carers and children at risk of social exclusion. This includes health visitors linked with the centre, underpinned with good information and data about families in the local area.
- Visits made by Health Visitors to all families in the reach area within two months of the child's birth.
- Arrangements for consulting parents and ensuring that their views and needs are taken into account when planning and delivering services.
- Links with Jobcentre Plus to encourage and support parents/carers who wish to consider training and employment.
- A business/service plan which is regularly reviewed and sets out clear expectations in terms of the delivery of quality outcomes aligned with appropriate financial planning.
- An Advisory Board.

[1] Designation is the first step in providing the full range of children's centre services to children and families. Centres gain designated status when they have certain basics in place, such as a manager, an administrator, premises and set opening hours.

Phase 3 Children's Centres are open at:

Arbury - St Luke's Church Centre, Victoria Road, Cambridge
Tel: 01223 474895

Bar Hill - Primary School on Gladeside
Tel: 01480 831423

Bassingbourn - Youth and Community Centre, South End
Tel: 01763 242344 extension 242

Brampton - Village Primary School on The Green
Tel: 01480 376191

Caldecote - Village Hall, Furlong Way, Highfields
Tel: 01954 211289

Linton - Cathodeon Centre at Linton Library, Horseheath Road
Tel: 07717 542663

Little Paxton - Primary School on Gordon Road
Tel: 01480 357540

Melbourn - Youth and Community Rooms at the Village College, The Moor
Tel: 01763 223407

Sawston - The Bellbird Primary School,Link Road
Tel: 01223 699478

Sawtry - Infant School, Middlefield Road
Tel: 01487 831542

Somersham - Victory Hall on Parkhall Road
Tel: 01487 841970

Trumpington - Fawcett Primary School, Alpha Terrace
Tel: 01223 840258

Waterbeach - Community Library at Waterbeach Community Primary School, High Street
Tel: 01480 831423

"The final stage of children's centre development in Cambridgeshire is complete...giving a total of 40 centres throughout the county."

Money and Management Matters

Can CBEST Help You?

"We try to be proactive and we are keen to give advice early on to prevent small issues becoming big problems."

The Childcare Business and Employer Support Team (CBEST) based at Bar Hill, can help your setting in a number of areas including

- sustainability
- finance and business planning
- management and governance
- premises
- employment and staffing
- grant funding
- and much more...

As a team, we try to be proactive and we are keen to give advice and support early on to prevent small issues becoming big problems. If you have any concerns surrounding the management of your setting, or just need some advice, please do give us a call on 01954 284203 and we will do our very best to help, or signpost you to someone who can.

The team of four coordinators and six officers is made up of a combination of County Council staff and Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA) employees. Here, one of the officers from the team gives us an insight in to her role and in particular, the work that she has recently undertaken with two new nurseries.

My name is Michelle Cooper and I have been a Childcare Business and Employer Support Officer (CBESO) for 18 months now. I work for the Pre-school Learning Alliance on a service contract to Cambridgeshire County Council. I'm based in Bar Hill one day per week and the rest of my 21 hours I spend visiting settings, training or in my home office. I provide support to committees and managers of pre-schools, day nurseries and out of school clubs when they make a request either through their Early Years Foundation Stage Adviser (EYFSA) or Childcare and Playwork Adviser (CAPA), or directly to the team at Bar Hill.

It is a varied job, as every referral is different and when I visit I try and tailor the support that I can give to the individuals' needs. Over the last year I have assisted many settings with sustainability issues, helping them get a clear picture of their finances and drawing up forecasts and business plans. Where these demonstrate a clear need, I then support them to access Sustainability, Premises or Transition Grants. We have lots of information, templates and tools at Bar Hill that I am able to give out to help do this. I have also supported settings with employment and governance issues.

Recently I have been involved with two new day nurseries opening later this year. Jemma Keegan from the Development Team directed the referrals to CBEST and I was able to visit and give guidance on safe recruitment before they embark on the process. I found this very enjoyable as I have hopefully armed them with enough information to recruit professionally - we all know good staff are key to good practice. If employment policies and procedures including staff inductions and appraisals are embedded early, this can help avoid conflict later on. It was good to be proactive with a new setting as all too often we are only called upon when things go wrong.

This is what Abby Marshall a childminder who is setting up a day nursery in Yaxley said:

"I originally contacted the Pre-school Learning Alliance regarding safe recruitment for the set up of a small nursery. The quality of the information I have received is excellent. It is highly detailed and covers every area of the process from writing your recruitment and selection policy, right through to shortlisting applicants and making offers.

Of huge benefit is the shortlisting matrix and templates provided for interview questions, application forms, offer letters, job specifications etc. I found these were right up to the minute regarding current best practice and recent legislation. This has cut my workload in this area enormously. Overall I have been extremely impressed by the support I have received. The team are very knowledgeable and have been so efficient. I would recommend the service to anyone - what they don't know isn't worth knowing!"

Money and Management Matters

Can CBEST Help You? ...continued

As well as Safe Recruitment I discussed a Marketing plan with Michelle and Kate of Krazy Dayz in Walsoken. As a result they organised an Open Day to promote the opening of their Nursery and prepared a press release to the local papers, resulting in 7-8 new people attending the Open Day who had read about it in the paper.

Our team is always looking for ways to be proactive and help settings.

Look out for workshops on Planning your AGM in the summer term and Marketing Matters in the autumn term. Alternatively just give us a ring at Bar Hill and see what we can do to help you.

National Minimum Wage (NMW)

From 1 October 2010 the NMW will increase as follows:

- £5.93 per hour for those aged 21 and over (currently £5.80)
- £4.92 per hour for 18-20 year olds (currently £4.83)
- £3.64 per hour for 16-17 year olds (currently £3.57)

The age threshold for the main adult rate has been lowered and from October 2010 will apply to workers aged 21 and over (previously 22 and over).

There will also be a new apprentice NMW of £2.50 per hour which will apply to those apprentices who are under 19 or who are aged 19 and over but in the first year of their apprenticeship.

Equality Act 2010

The new Equality Act has now been passed and most of the new provisions will come in to effect from October 2010. The Act is intended to simplify and strengthen the previous legislation and protect individuals from unfair treatment, to create a fairer society.

If you would like more information regarding the Act please visit: www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx

"The Equality Act is intended to protect individuals from unfair treatment, to create a fairer society."

Staff Stranded Abroad

As a result of the volcanic eruption in Iceland which affected many Britons returning from holidays abroad over the Easter period, we have received enquiries from some settings asking if their employees should still be paid for this forced period of leave. These workers are willing to work but are unable to meet their commitments due to factors beyond their control.

It is worth remembering the following if you should find yourself in this situation in the future:

- Consider the terms of employment. The terms of the contract need to be met by both employer and employee, but negotiation of terms in difficult times can often lead to an agreeable resolution.
- Consider the employee using the period of unauthorised absence as part of their annual holiday entitlement.
- If the holiday entitlement has already been exceeded, remember that should you choose to make deductions from wages you should ensure that you get the employee's specific consent, as employees are protected from unlawful deductions from their wages unless they have consented to this in writing.
- Check the terms of the employee's contract before you consider the above option, and remember that even if there is a clause to allow deductions from wages the employee may decide to challenge any deductions made as unfair.

Money and Management Matters

Employed or Self-employed?

"Even if a contract says a worker is self-employed, if the facts indicate otherwise then the worker may be your employee."

Do you have some staff that you consider to be self-employed? If so, please read on to find out what HMRC has to say about employment status of workers.

"It's your responsibility to correctly determine the employment status of your workers - that is, whether they're employed by you or self-employed. This depends on the terms and conditions of your working relationship with each worker.

It's important to get your workers' employment status right because it affects the way tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs) are calculated for them. And it determines whether or not you have to operate PAYE (Pay As You Earn) on their earnings.

Employment status isn't a matter of choice for either you or your workers. It's a matter of fact, based on key terms and conditions of your working relationship with them. In most cases these terms and conditions will be reflected in your contract with the worker. But even if a contract says a worker is self-employed, if the facts indicate otherwise then the worker may be your employee."

For further information please visit the HMRC website: www.hmrc.gov.uk/paye/employees/ start-leave/status.htm.

You can also use the Employment Status Indicator to check whether an employee is employed or self-employed. Visit the HMRC website: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/calcs/esi.htm

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Careers, Training and Workforce Development

Workforce Development - What Have We Planned?

The Workforce Development Team are in a difficult position currently as we do not know what the future holds. There is a new government and some of the financial cuts may have an impact on our work.

At the time of writing, all our plans are based on what we know, but be aware that we may need to change direction and may not be able to offer all the financial support we planned.

The new work plan for workforce development has identified priorities:

- Recruitment activities will identify people that are willing to train and committed to the profession.
- All leaders/managers in settings have a level 3 qualification and have an understanding of the training needs for all their staff.
- All settings have a trained designated person in child protection, equalities and special needs.
- Staff committed to continuous professional development and reflective practice.
- Early years settings eligible for Graduate Leader Fund have staff on the graduate pathway and/or an Early Years Professional.

We will continue to inform you about the details of this work in future Jigsaw articles.

For more information contact Pirjo Mudd, Workforce Development Manager
pirjo.mudd@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Careers, Training and Workforce Development

New Qualifications Briefing

From September 2010 new qualifications will be launched to replace the existing Early Years and Playwork qualifications. These will include:

- **Level 2 Certificate for the Children and Young People's Workforce**
  This is aimed at all those who work, or wish to work, in the Children and Young People's workforce (excluding Playwork). This will provide a progression route to the level 3 Diploma.
- **Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce**
  This qualification has a number of mandatory units, and learners then select the pathway most suitable to their job role. The three pathways are: Early Years pathway, Learning Development and Support Services, and Children's Social Care. Learners will then select from a choice of optional units.
- **Level 2 Award/Certificate/Diploma in Playwork**
  This is aimed at all those who work or wish to work in the Playwork sector. It will provide a progression route to the level 3 Award/Certificate/Diploma in Playwork
- **Level 3 Award/Certificate/Diploma in Playwork**
  This qualification is expected to replace existing qualifications in January 2011, further details will be sent to settings when available.

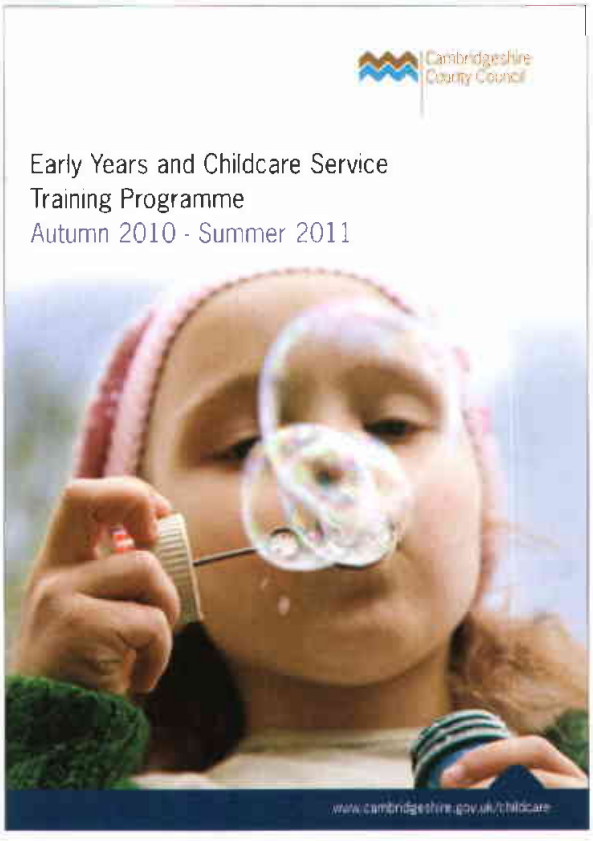
- **Level 3 Award in Playwork for Early Years Workers**
- **Level 3 Award in Early Years for Playworkers**

These courses are not being replaced and we recommend that workers who currently have a level 3 in Early Years and work in the Playwork sector (or vice versa) register to undertake the award as soon as possible.

- **Level 4**

Please note that the level 4 Children's Care, Learning and Development (CCLD) is not being replaced and we are recommending that learners register for the **Foundation Degree in Early Years** or a leadership and management course.

At the time of writing, final details of the courses are being agreed and we will publish these as they become available.



"From September 2010 new qualifications will be launched to replace the existing early years and playwork qualifications."

Big Event

After last year's success, there will be a Big Event again in 2010. This conference looks at issues concerning the whole children's workforce.

The event will take place 22 September 2010 at Marriott's Hotel in Huntingdon and the programme will consist of sharing good practice through presentations about success stories on integrated working.

Invitations and a more detailed programme will follow.

For more information contact Pirjo Mudd, Workforce Development Manager
pirjo.mudd@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Careers, Training and Workforce Development

News from the Early Years and Childcare Training Centre

"It all helps with that common goal we all have: that of providing the best possible service for the children in our care."

Please see the article 'Briefing on New Qualifications' for an important update on the new qualifications

Open Days at Bar Hill
Find out more about the new qualifications, which courses are suitable for you, and register for courses.

Tues	21 Sept 2010	9am until 12 noon
Wed	22 Sept 2010	4pm until 9pm

Please telephone the qualifications administrator to confirm your attendance on 01954 283424 or email eyctraining@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Courses planned for Autumn Term 2010
Please note that this information is correct at time of going to press and may change depending on demand and available funding. It is possible that NVQs may continue to run if there is a delay in developing and launching the new courses by the awarding bodies

Early Years

- Level 2 Certificate for the Children and Young People's Workforce
- Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce
- Level 3 Award in Early Years for Playworkers

Playwork

- Level 2 Award/Certificate/Diploma in Playwork
- Level 3 Award/Certificate/Diploma in Playwork
- Level 3 Award in Playwork for Early Years Workers

Leadership and Management
We will be running a series of leadership and management workshops during the autumn term with the option of registering to undertake the Level 3 Award ILM. **Please ring 01954 283424 or 01954 273363 for further details.**

Venue for Open Days at Bar Hill
EYCC Training Centre, Unit 3, Bar Hill Business Park, Saxon Way, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB23 8SL

Postal Qualifications Audit

Over the last three years, childcare managers and staff may remember having a visit from a Training Audit Guidance Officer (TAGO) from the Childcare Careers team, to carry out an audit of staff qualification levels in their settings. The information gathered at these visits was vital in helping us to plan future training provision, and in ensuring that we hold accurate information on the childcare workforce. Your cooperation in this process was very much appreciated.

We need your help again! The data has been recorded on our system but of course it becomes out-of-date very quickly due to natural changes such as staff movement, and to staff having completed qualifications which were only just underway when the audit visit took place. The team are therefore in the process of carrying out a postal audit so that, with your continued help, we can make the necessary changes to ensure your setting details are as accurate as possible.

So far, postal audits have been carried out in the Huntingdon and Fenland areas. The remainder of the county can expect to get their letters over the next few months. We know that you receive a lot of mail and a lot of requests for information but please do bear with us! It all helps with that common goal we all have: that of providing the best possible service for the children in our care.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the postal audit process further, then please do ring Childcare Careers on 01954 273371, or email us at childcarecareers@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Equalities and Inclusion

Diversity Without Tokenism

Bilingual Labels - To Label or Not .....?

Many practitioners have been asking about the point of labelling things in their setting in more than one language. There is no definitive answer about the use of bilingual signs, but the answer must depend on the reason for doing it in the first place.

The key principle is that all children need to grow up understanding that there are languages other than their own which people use effectively in their everyday and professional lives. Moreover, no one language, including English, is more important than any other language: English, despite being widely used, for historical reasons, for international business, political or educational debate is only one language amongst many.

In order for very young children to understand about the variety of languages in the world, they need to hear different languages being spoken, and learning to say hello, goodbye or count to five in other languages will not confuse them. They will also enjoy singing songs or doing ring games from around the world.

Most practitioners now ask parents of children who speak a language other than English for key words in their home language. If these are used frequently, all the children will hear and learn them: but if they are mispronounced or incorrect they are not really very helpful!

Most bilingual labels are tokenistic if they are not read to the children. It is good practice, however, to have examples of different scripts around the rooms – even though the children cannot read them themselves. They can notice that the scripts are different and may enjoy using the different scripts in their mark making. For the same reason, it is useful to buy newspapers in different languages for the role play area, and to have bilingual books on the bookshelves.

Useful bilingual labels, like "Please shut the gate" can help parents who have little English to feel included and the Welcome poster is also good as a way of telling parents that the setting values linguistic diversity. Many settings now have their own photo book to share with parents who have very limited understanding of English, and this is often a preferable way of communicating rather than trying to use a phrase book or translation website.

In settings where there is a wide range of heritage languages, a further dilemma is to decide which languages to use on the bilingual labels. In settings with no parents who speak other languages, it is going to be totally random and rather tokenistic to put them up.

When thinking about using bilingual labels or signs in the setting, it is also important to remember that sign language and Makaton are other forms of language which children can enjoy and use with encouragement from the adults around them.

Recently, several settings with a very diverse intake, have been using bilingual stories very effectively with their children, using the parents to come in and read them to the children. This is a real skill to organise as the children who do not understand the language still need to be engaged by the practitioner either by using the English translation, or by acting the story out using props while the parent reads it in their own language.

Sometimes parents will record the stories for the children to listen to on the listening centre. One setting which received the bursary for Parents as Partners in Learning spent the money on bilingual versions of favourite stories like the Hungry Caterpillar, and Elmer the Elephant, and set these up as a library loan for children to take home and share with their parents.

It is possible today to buy talking books, talking photo albums, talking lids and cards and use these to record in several languages. These again strengthen the links between home and the setting where more than one language is spoken. www.TalkingProducts.com has a catalogue which may be useful to look at.

The important point from all this is that there is not one right response to the question of whether to use bilingual labels. However, it is important to discuss the issue, and make rational decisions about what you will do as a staff group and then be very clear about the reasons for making whatever decision you agree to adopt. This decision could be reflected in the equality policy or EAL protocol for the setting to ensure that it is regularly reviewed and changed as the intake of children becomes more diverse.

continued overleaf...

"Useful bilingual labels, like 'Please shut the gate' can help parents who have little English to feel included."

Equalities and Inclusion

Diversity Without Tokenism ...continued

"Dolls need to be planned for and not stuck in the role play resources anyhow."

Multicultural Dolls – Are They Helpful?

Almost every setting is able to produce at least one black doll they have bought for the children to play with. Unfortunately these are almost always bought randomly and without any thought as to how they will be used and what they add to the diversity agenda overall.

The purpose of dolls in a setting is twofold: to represent a young and defenceless baby who can be nurtured, or to act as a "friend" to a child who needs to talk out and explore their thoughts and feelings.

Of course dolls are also important in developing children's skills in dressing and undressing, fastening buttons and hooks and eyes or Velcro effectively. They are also useful in developing young children's skills of personal hygiene and caring for others. They can be invaluable in role play and making sense of their world, and in developing their imagination.

Ethnic dolls should engage the child with the concept of diversity and the differences and similarities between people from the multicultural society we live in: they provide excellent opportunities for the children to ask questions about skin colour and ethnicity in a safe play environment. However, unless an adult engages effectively in this play, and takes care to observe and note the way the children interact with the dolls, this could be counter productive: it is important to observe how the children react to the ethnic dolls – do they reject the ones that have different skin colour to them? Does a black child prefer to play with the white dolls? Are the black dolls disrespected? Or, as seen in a setting recently, do they get used as weapons to hit other children?

In settings with little diversity amongst the children, one black doll that is cared for and played with by the adults, may be better than having lots which are ignored. In settings with more diversity, the ethnic dolls can be a real talking point about their clothes, their names, their favourite games and stories and can help the practitioner to understand more about the cultural and emotional life of their children.

If dolls are in the setting for the positive reasons outlined above, and if they are representative of real babies, it is important that dolls are treated appropriately. They need to be planned for and not stuck in the role play resources anyhow: each doll should have a change of clothes, storage for these and somewhere to sleep at the end of each day. They will get undressed because children find it so much easier to undress them than to dress them! However, at the end of the session the dolls should be dressed and put to sleep as part of the tidying up routine. Time spent helping children to dress the dolls will also help the children to dress themselves, and it gives very natural opportunities for language development and making choices. Having an ethnic doll which is special to the group is another positive way to develop children's learning, as they can have turns to bring the "baby" for snack and circle time, to take it outside in the pushchair to play, to feed and burp it and generally learn caring skills.

Settings which take this attitude and care with their dolls, may also be really good at using the persona dolls in their setting. Training for using persona dolls can be accessed through the setting's local authority adviser, or by contacting the Equalities Team, on 01954 273339.

Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

An exciting new booklet has been launched in Cambridgeshire called 'A Graduated Response to Special Educational Needs'. This booklet provides practitioners with a way of making judgements about their children within the context of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is being used by settings alongside other observations to identify children's individual needs and how to respond to these.

Early years settings are best placed to complete these observations as their knowledge of the child is extensive.

continued...

Equalities and Inclusion

Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The format of the booklet is in line with The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001) and helps to establish whether a child's needs are at Early Years Action, Early Years Action Plus or Significant and Complex Needs.
It provides a link for practitioners between their EYFS profiles and the different areas of special educational needs identified in the SEN Code of Practice, namely Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, Emotional, Behavioural and Social difficulties. (The sensory and physical section is in the process of being completed and will be available at a later date)

Briefing sessions have already taken place across the county and training is being offered to launch this new booklet. Many early years settings are now using the Graduated Response to Special Education Needs in partnership with parents and outside agencies.

One of the differences with this new approach is that it gives guidance on the provision that should be put in place for the child. At Early Years Action **'support and help ....from within the setting's resources' and 'Individual Child Plan Targets'**. At Early Years Action Plus this may include advice from other professionals, a **'referral to outside agencies' and/or 'request for Early Years Access Funding'**.

For a child whose profile is consistently within the area of Significant and Complex Needs then a range of support is likely to be offered and a request for Statutory Assessment may be appropriate.

What is a Statutory Assessment?

A very detailed multi-disciplinary assessment of the child's needs and the provision required to meet them. Assessment may lead to a Statement of Special Educational Need.

- Parents/Carers should be fully involved with the request for Statutory Assessment and their consent is needed.
- It is important to remember that the special educational needs of the vast majority of children should be met effectively at Early Years Action or Early Years Action Plus without the need for a Statutory Assessment Request.

Graduated Response to Special Educational Needs

The expertise of early years settings is widely recognised and practitioners are now expected to make the request for Statutory Assessment and gather the evidence required from outside agencies.

Please remember!!.....Advice can be sought from the Support for Learning, Early Years Team for your area.

If you have any questions about 'A Graduated Response to Special Educational Needs' or requesting Statutory Assessment please don't hesitate to contact your Support for Learning, Early Years Team (see details below).

Support for Learning, Early Years Team -
Huntingdonshire
7 The Meadow, Meadow Lane, St.Ives,
Cambridgeshire PE27 4LG
Tel: 01480 373756

Support for Learning, Early Years Team -
East Cambridgeshire and Fenland
March Business Centre, Dartford Road, March,
Cambridgeshire PE15 8AN
Tel: 01354 653902

Support for Learning, Early Years Team –
Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
18-20 Signet Court, Swann's Road,
Cambridge CB5 8LA
Tel: 01223 508731

"The expertise of early years settings is widely recognised and practitioners are now expected to make the request for Statutory Assessment and gather the evidence required from outside agencies."

Childminders and the Outcomes and Quality Improvement (OQI) Grant

"The children have been able to claim back control of their outdoor space and the freedom to explore."

Quality improvements can make a difference to positive outcomes for children. Here are some accounts from three Accredited Network childminders, who have recently been awarded 'Outcomes and Quality Improvement' grant funded support. Each childminder has a different business vision about what could make a difference to the children in their care and has chosen resources with quality improvements in mind.

Rose-Marie Dixon, based in Cottenham comments "The grant has enabled us to purchase a pirate ship; a wooden house; and outdoor musical instruments. It has encouraged the children to play without many interactions or organising of outdoor activities by an adult. The children have been able to claim back control of their outdoor space and the freedom to explore. It has provided the children with more opportunities to learn through play.

It has given the setting a more professional outlook. By involving the children in the planning of the play equipment it has proven a great success in self-directed play and has given children the opportunity to choose what they want to do. Some children have needed the support of adults to explore their play space but it has given the adults a lot of enjoyment to try out the equipment alongside the children. It has provided a good level of self-esteem and confidence and a willingness to take more risk.

We carry out risk assessments prior to using the equipment. We also discuss with children and encourage children to adapt and develop an awareness of how to manage risk themselves. Children have shown they can take turns, share, problem solve and gain a greater understanding of the world around them.

They are using their communication skills to instruct their peers to join in with games on the boat or in the house. The children are physically challenging themselves to pursue difficult role-plays because of the new equipment.

All children of all ages and stages of development are able to use the equipment with or without help. Through observation, we are able to monitor how the equipment is used and how we can improve on quality of play for all children"

Jacky Amey is based in Bar Hill and has purchased a laptop and printer, for her and children's use in any room and on any surface, so that all children can access it easily, whilst she monitors appropriate use. Jacky says "The printer is situated in the playroom, enabling the children to print their own work and retrieve it from the machine themselves – they love it, and it gives them a real sense of achievement! Parents are provided with photographs of their child's day, now the printer is more accessible and the pictures can be printed out instantly in the same room.

A child's digital camera has enabled the children to become confident with the technology; able to point and click, decide what to take pictures of and discuss whether they were successful, alter the images and print out their work. Because the one I chose is designed with children in mind, it is robust, easy to hold two-handed and simple to use. It is a great asset to resources.

There is a 'home corner' in the play room, and it has been enhanced by the addition of some true-to-life ICT accessories, such as microwave, vacuum cleaner, telephone and toaster. They bring the children's role-play to life, where they can identify everyday technology and get to touch and control objects that they might otherwise be unable to access.

An electronic keyboard and drum kit give the children a chance to have fun making different noises, and create their own music, even recording it if they want to. They learn what different buttons do: on/off, volume, different sounds and rhythms etc. Sometimes they even use them in conjunction with other more traditional instruments to make their own little bands!

Childminders and OQI ...continued

A Wii console and various games has been a great addition. It has allowed children of different ages and stages of development to enjoy time together and they benefit from learning from each other. The children design their own unique 'Mii' to look like themselves (a useful exercise in looking positively at their similarities and differences) and move it around the games. We've found it a great way to have fun, cheer each other on and keep fit!!

A great idea called Talk-Time cards provide a visual record of our daily routine and also includes a facility to record a message that the children can play back by pressing a button. They love to see pictures of themselves on the wall, and are fascinated to hear their own voices too!! I plan to use these postcard-sized plaques as a weekly reward, so that the child receiving it (and their parents) can be proud to hear why they have been chosen to take it home. It will be used to encourage positive behaviour, significant development tailored to a particular child and milestones achieved and celebrated by everyone in the setting."

Julie Dixon, based in Linton comments "This grant was very much appreciated by all of us at our setting.

This was very exciting for myself, my assistant and the children. Some of the children said what would be good to buy. They have benefited hugely by new toys; ICT equipment; Wii fit; digital camera; dolls' house multicultural accessories; dressing up trolley and lots more. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped me to get this grant."

It is abundantly clear that each childminder has enthusiastically planned what resources would be beneficial for the children in their care considering the ages and stages of the children and impact within the six areas of learning of EYFS. All the childminders featured have taken time to consult with children and their parents as part of the decision making process.

All children demonstrate increased self esteem and confidence in their own capabilities physically, mentally, emotionally and verbally. All three childminders consistently go the extra mile for their charges and families. They are always mindful of quality, with a desire to regularly reflect on their childminding and business practices, looking for opportunities to make any quality improvements that will influence increased positive outcomes for the children in their care. All three childminders are very different yet they have in common a true love for the care of their minded children and the desire to have a positive influence.

"The children love to see pictures of themselves on the wall, and are fascinated to hear their own voices too!"

Roald Dahl Day is Coming!

September 13 2010 marks the fourth annual Roald Dahl Day – on what would have been the great man's birthday. It is a celebration of the work, life and multi-faceted legacy of one of the world's best-loved storytellers.

Why not take the opportunity to re-visit some of your favourite stories and rhymes by celebrating with the children.

You and the children could read stories, dress up as characters from the books, paint or draw pictures or even make a model of the Enormous Crocodile or a puppet of Fantastic Mr. Fox! Why not have a BFG breakfast or make some revolting stew!

With the aid of a digital camera you could even create you own stories by taking photos and getting the children to write or tell you what to write for the text.

Sign up for more details and newsletter at www.roalddahlday.info or check out the official Roald Dahl website www.roalddahl.com

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Lynda and Laura Molloy, from Milton and Sue Simkins from March who have all recently achieved an 'Outstanding' grading from Ofsted.

Fenland Childminders Abroad

"There are just bare rooms with desks or sometimes the children sit on the floor."

Fenland childminders Carol Forrest from Wisbech and Jackie Garner from Whittlesey are both involved in organising help for disadvantaged children in India and Africa and have both recently visited the projects they are helping to support.

Carol visited two orphanages in southern India and says "I have just come back from my third visit to Southern India with my friend Ruth. We spent a few days at the boys' orphanage and then went to the girls' orphanage, which is two hours away in a minibus. I would not like to drive in India as road signs are confusing and the roads are very bumpy. Drivers overtake even if something is coming the other way and you also have to avoid goats and oxen in the road.

There are eighteen girls and twenty-eight boys in the two orphanages. Their ages range from 6 to 17. The boys keep all their clothes and belongings in a suitcase. Each of the children has chores to do each day. They have to get up early, as they also have to wash their own clothes, outside on a stone slab with a bar of soap and cold water, before they go to school.

We took all the boys out to visit a paper mill where we watched the wood and other material being made into pulp and then saw the finished rolls of paper at the end of the process. The girls we took to a big shop to buy each of them a new outfit. They enjoyed choosing their own clothes; some chose dresses and others the traditional Tridar, which is the trousers and top. This was the first time that the girls had been to the shop and had been able to select their own clothes.

We also visited a kindergarten (nursery school) in one of the villages. In a small building there were forty-five children between the ages of 2 and 5. There were a few posters on the wall but nothing else in this small room. We took them some bats and balls to play with.

Seeing how the people live in the villages was quite an eye-opener. Most of the houses are huts with one big room. There is a fire in one corner for cooking with the rest of the room for living in and sleeping.

Children go to school but some of the schools have no resources. There are just bare rooms with desks or sometimes the children sit on the floor. The children often do not finish their education, as they may be needed at home or to go out to work. There is a lot of poverty in this area. In spite of this I noticed that, everywhere I went, the children were always happy even though they have very little.

In each village there is a president and all the people of the village answer to him. Many of the people never go to hospital as this costs money. On previous visits, we have paid for a doctor and bought medicines in order to run a medical camp in the village. We hope to visit India again in 2011."

Jackie describes her visit to Kenya "Over the last five years my husband and I have been visiting a town in Kenya called Shanzu. This year we visited a nursery/junior school called Doddington Joy Junior, the original was destroyed in the uprising two years ago. It costs the Kenyan teachers £1000 a year to

Fenland Childminders Abroad ...continued

run it with 30 children aged from 3 to 11 years. Over the past two years a local couple have taken it over and are busy raising money to keep it running. We visited the school taking uniforms and books and returned with memories. Their room is approx 15 feet square with two doors and no windows, very hot in summer and cold in winter. It is crammed with desks, plastic chairs and a standing blackboard.

They have recently installed running water and a flushing toilet, rather than a hole in the ground. Money is being raised over here to enable them to rent two rooms next door. Ten of the 30 children are orphans and are living with extended families.

The children's typical day is from 7 30am to 5 30pm, Monday to Friday although some schools are open on a Saturday morning.

They have 45 minutes for lunch - some bring their own or parents pay for a plate of ugali (maize porridge) and beans. The school rooms are bare – there's no equipment, toys or pictures and very few books. Paper is used time and time again and nothing is wasted.

We were greeted by the children singing English and Swahili songs and rhymes, mostly they speak English all day with 1 hour of Swahili, their native language. One of the older boys asked me to sing so I recited 'The elephant goes like this and that' for which I was applauded.

The visit made me realise how lucky we are in our schools and sometimes I wonder if we provide them with too much, especially when I see these Kenyan children so happy, even when they have so little."

"Paper is used time and time again and nothing is wasted."

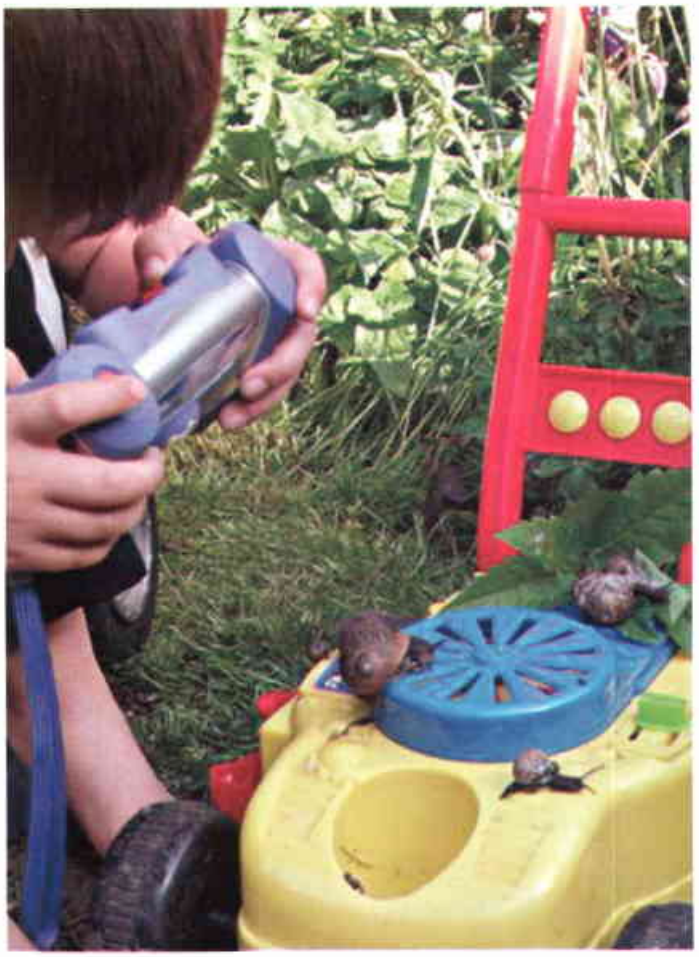
Pack on the Back – Is Back!

Pack on the back - the free toy lending resource for childminders, will be familiar to many as they are distributed in distinctive red and black backpacks.

Our current packs have been around for a while so it's time for a re-vamp. There will be new titles and resources to look out for in September. New packs will include items to support Communication, ICT, Outside Play, Role Play, World Cultures and Exploration. The packs will also include ideas and inspiration for how the packs could be used to support the EYFS.

The NCMA team is in negotiation with children's centres across the county and hopes that childminders will be able to access the new resources via their local centre.

The team will be carrying out an inspection of our existing packs so if you have a pack which you need to return please contact your development Officer, the Childminding Support Administrator or bring it along to a Childminder Support Session.



Childminding and Home Based Childcare

Lynda and Laura Molloy – Our Setting

"We are constantly self-evaluating what we do so that we keep on top of any improvements or changes to be made."

Lynda and Laura Molloy work together as childminders in Milton and Lynda describes their setting.

"Laura has been a childminder for 6.5 years and I have been a childminder for 26.5 years - we have been working together for 6.5 years.

We both feel that it is a great honour to be graded Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted. We also feel that it is both a very rewarding and interesting job, especially having known the children to come in as babies and being an instrumental part in their growing into confident young children. We feel the key to success is to have lots of activities on offer for all ages and stages of development, whilst organising and planning for the terms ahead using themes or seasonal activities.

Making the parents feel confident, involved and happy to leave their child in our care is of the essence. We talk with the parents every day and use daily diaries and scrapbooks to record what the children have done, using write ups and photos.

We are constantly self-evaluating what we do so that we keep on top of any improvements or changes to be made.

We ensure the children's needs always come first, by asking them what they would like to do. We ensure we have lots of choices for children, the big ones and the little ones alike choose for themselves by having different activity stations and from a homemade scrapbook of photographs and pictures of all the toys we have, so if they can't yet talk they can point to the picture of what they would like to do.

Outside we have lots of garden toys, in the summer we put a gazebo up and make a cosy area with cushions and books or small toys.

We make the children aware of the wider world by taking them on walks, picnics, to the mobile library, strawberry picking etc. The children also grow lots of fruit and vegetables from seeds and pips from the fruit we have had at snack time. We also grow runner beans and potatoes in buckets.

We are proud of the calm and happy atmosphere in the house. The children are confident, stimulated, well behaved and reassured by our routine, they love coming to us and we love caring for them."

Welcome Joe!

The NCMA team is delighted to welcome Joe Ferreday as a Childminding Support and Development Officer in the Huntingdon area. Joe comes with a wealth of experience and is looking forward to the new challenge of working in Cambridgeshire!

Joe says: "My name is Joanna Ferreday but everyone calls me Joe. I have just returned from travelling around Asia and Australia with my husband for the past six months. During this time I have experienced loads of exciting adventures such as climbing the great wall of China, exploring temple ruins in Cambodia and braving a four week drive across the Australian outback in a campervan! Now I am back in the country I am excited to be getting back to work and in such an exciting new role! In my previous experience within the early years I have worked mainly in Children's Centres in Nottinghamshire as a Family Support Worker and a Children's Allotment Coordinator, as well as working on street play projects in inner city Nottingham. I have moved back to Cambridgeshire now to be near to my family as this is where I grew up.

I am very excited about this new role and look forward to getting to know you all."

Play and Playwork

New and Exciting Training for Out of School Clubs in the 2010/2011 Training Programme!

"The Childcare and Playwork Team will be trialling two Saturday morning training events."

The Childcare and Playwork Advisers are passionate about the work you do in the playwork field, and want to ensure that the playwork workforce continues to provide and deliver high quality provisions and experiences for children in their care. We urge you to make the most of the training we offer. In return for a relatively small amount of time and a contribution to costs, you will receive interesting training that will improve your setting, increase your knowledge and look great on your CV! So get booking!

Don't forget to have a good look through the new training programme for the forthcoming academic year. Through the annual Quality Monitoring process and via consultations with settings, the Childcare and Playwork Team has put together a number of new and exciting training sessions. We are also re-running a number of popular sessions from last year such as Kids Rule Ok! and EYFS - Moving On.

All About Play – takes a closer look at how children play and how we as playworkers can effectively support this process.

Risk Assessing? Don't Panic! – aims to clear up the confusion about what needs to be risk assessed and when, and provides delegates with the skill to complete robust assessments. This session closely supports Risky Play training that returns for its second year.

We have two fun and practical courses looking at the outdoor environment:

The Great Outdoors! – a practical session that looks at the importance of the outdoor environment and how to make the best use of it within your Out of School setting.

Forest Schools – a mix of theory and practical sessions to offer participants an insight into the Forest Schools' ethos of the social and emotional benefits of outdoor play.

Following feedback from settings highlighting a desire to access more training on Saturdays the Childcare and Playwork Team will be trialling two Saturday morning training events – one in the north and one in the south of the county, covering a range of training sessions. Please keep your eyes peeled for further information.

Finally, please remember that out of school settings can access training from any part of the training programme (not just the Out of School section) wherever you see the OOS symbol by the title of the training.

Hope to see you all at courses over the next year!

Play and Playwork

Designated Personnel

"Clubs have been asked to collect games ideas to share at the Big Day Out."

Does your setting have a trained ENCo (Equalities Named Coordinator) or SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)?

We would like to take this opportunity to remind all out of school settings that it is a **requirement of both the Ofsted Welfare Requirements and the Cambridgeshire Local Agreement** that settings have a trained SENCo and a **requirement of the Local Agreement** for all settings to have a trained ENCo.

Figures collated recently show there are **70** settings across the county operating without a trained **SENCo** and **88** operating without a trained **ENCo**.

This represents just over **40%** and **51%** respectively.

If you are aware that your setting is currently operating without a trained SENCo or ENCo, can we encourage you to prioritise booking on the appropriate course in the 2010/2011 training programme? We have tried to respond to feedback from settings by providing a mix of daytime, evening and weekend sessions, and would appreciate any further feedback from settings to help us ensure your needs are being met.

The Childcare and Playwork team will continue to monitor settings' uptake of this training.

The Big Day Out – 4 August 2010

The Childcare and Playwork Advisers are very excited to tell you about The Big Day Out!

Have you heard about this year's Playday? This year's campaign is 'Our Place' – see www.playday.org.uk for more details.

The Our Place campaign puts children at the heart of our communities, and asks everyone, young and old, to help create better places for all of us to live and play. The campaign will build up to Playday on Wednesday 4 August, when thousands of children, young people and communities will get out to play at hundreds of locally organised events. Also, we are going to hold our annual Big Day Out on this date and go with this theme!

Clubs have been asked to collect games ideas to share at the Big Day Out. Playworkers - if your club is interested in sharing games ideas with other children at The Big Day Out, please contact your Childcare and Playwork Adviser.

Prize Draw! All clubs that send ideas to their CAPA will be entered in a prize draw - winner to be announced at The Big Day Out.

Outstanding Setting

Buccaneers, the before and after school club in Buckden, was judged Outstanding by Ofsted in terms of the overall quality of the provision and also in all individual categories, including the effectiveness of leadership and management. The report said that the staff were aware of all the children's needs and supported their welfare at all times, providing high-quality learning. It added that parents were kept well informed about their children's learning development and well being. The inspectors also said the children's behaviour was exemplary.

Buccaneers Manager, Carol Klein, says, "It was a great team effort from staff - Julie King, Lisa Hawkins, Cynthia Hope and Laura White - parents and children - well done to everyone!"

The CAPA team would like to congratulate all at Buccaneers! We would also like to invite all settings to share any good quality practice with us.

Future CAPA Support

The Childcare and Playwork Team has completed a review around the level of support given to all out of school provision in Cambridgeshire to enable us to meet current needs more effectively. We are now using a model that considers the type of service that is offered, along with the individual development needs of the staff and/or setting.

The points below illustrate Childcare and Playwork Adviser (CAPA) involvement at each level of support and challenge. The CAPA Team will be happy to answer any queries you may have about this.

CAPAs will regularly contact settings to ensure the correct level of support applies and request that settings contact their CAPA to inform them of any significant change that could affect the level of support received.

All settings should have received a letter informing them of the level of support they will now be receiving. If any further information is needed around this, please do not hesitate to contact your CAPA. We trust that with these new arrangements in place we will continue to work collaboratively to ensure significant and lasting improvements that support children's care, learning and development.

"All settings should have received a letter informing them of what level of support they will now be receiving."

Voluntary Registered Settings and Breakfast Clubs

- Email/telephone support on request
- Invitations to Out of School Provider Network meetings.

Universal

- Annual Quality Monitoring Visit to support implementation of the Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework (QF)
- Email/telephone support on request
- Invitations to Out of School Provider Network meetings.

NB. Settings in receipt of Universal support and challenge will be contacted by their CAPA to ensure Universal level still applies.

Universal Plus

- Annual Quality Monitoring Visit to support implementation of the Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework (QF)
- Support visit 6 months after Annual Quality Monitoring Visit to discuss progress with the QF Action Plan and any other issues
- Email/telephone support on request
- Invitations to Out of School Provider Network meetings.

NB. Settings in receipt of Universal Plus support and challenge will be contacted by their CAPA to ensure Universal Plus level still applies.

Targeted

- Annual Quality Monitoring Visit to support implementation of the Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework (QF)
- Half Termly Visit from CAPA to include a range of activities e.g. modelling practice, observing practice or joint visits to other settings, where applicable
- During these visits a termly QF Action Plan review will take place
- Email/telephone support on request
- Invitations to Out of School Provider Network meetings.

Intensive

- Annual Quality Monitoring Visit to support implementation of the Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework (QF)
- Fortnightly visit and/or contact from CAPA to include a range of activities e.g. modelling practice, observing practice or joint visits to other settings, where applicable
- During these visits a termly Focused Support Action Plan review will take place
- Email /telephone support on request
- Invitations to Out of School Provider Network meetings.

Children's Participation (4)

"To ensure children are aware of all the activities that are available, you may want to put together a catalogue of activities."

In this issue of Jigsaw, we look at how children's decision making can be implemented within an out of school setting around planning activities and drawing up rules.

How can children be more involved in planning activities?

How are the activities planned in the setting? Who chooses which activities are brought out from storage? Ideally we want the children to enter the play environment and see lots of exciting activities waiting to be played with, rather than a room with just empty tables and chairs sitting there.

So how can we do this, whilst ensuring the children are given the opportunity to choose? We all know that some children have their favourite games or toys they like to play with, we hear them talk about it, we watch them play with it day in day out. What we are observing is children choosing the activities and we need to continue to make them available. We can also ask the children what they would like to play with. This can be done informally through day to day communication, or can be done as part of a more formal process.

You may have an ideas poster that children can draw/write their ideas on. To ensure children are aware of all the activities that are available, you may want to put together a catalogue of activities, which includes pictures and a written description. This is a particularly good idea for settings whose storage is not accessible to children.

Children need to be made aware that they can ask for activities to be brought out of storage. How do you ensure children are aware of this? Do you have signs up? Do you remind children? When children ask, what is the response? Sometimes we may have to say 'no' as there may not be time to start a game of Monopoly when there is just ten minutes to home time. Or it could be they want to do something that needs high staff supervision levels, which cannot be met on that occasion. When we do say no, we need to explain our reasons and ideally offer an alternative time.

Circle of participation: Activities

Children are given a budget, make responsible choices, choose when, where and how they play, make their own rules
Staff give children what staff want to without choice and if children don't like it they have nothing to play with!
Staff will offer children's options if it suits staff's needs
Staff consult children but manipulate them to agree with staff suggestions
Children can access a few items without needing to ask.
Staff will consider children's views and suggestions when planning play opportunities.
Children have free access to all activities at all times.
Staff and children negotiate planning of play opportunities, buying resources. Children are encouraged to extend play opportunities

Children's Participation (4) ...continued

How can children be more involved in drawing up rules?

All settings tend to display the 'rules' of the club. Some clubs display positive rules such as, ' have fun', others 'no running', and there is no hard and fast rule about how the rules should be displayed. What we should be considering is how the rules have come about, who they are for (only the children or both children and staff?), why a particular rule has been adopted and the consequence of not following the rules.

Does your setting have the standard 'respect each other'? This tends to be a rule that children are aware receives a positive response from adults, but is it really their rule. Have you ever asked a five year old what 'respect' means?

So how can we encourage children to have more choice over developing club rules that are meaningful?

We can ask them what they think are the most important things to them that help them to have a good time and keep safe whilst at the club. Then we can discuss and decide which rules will support these aspects.

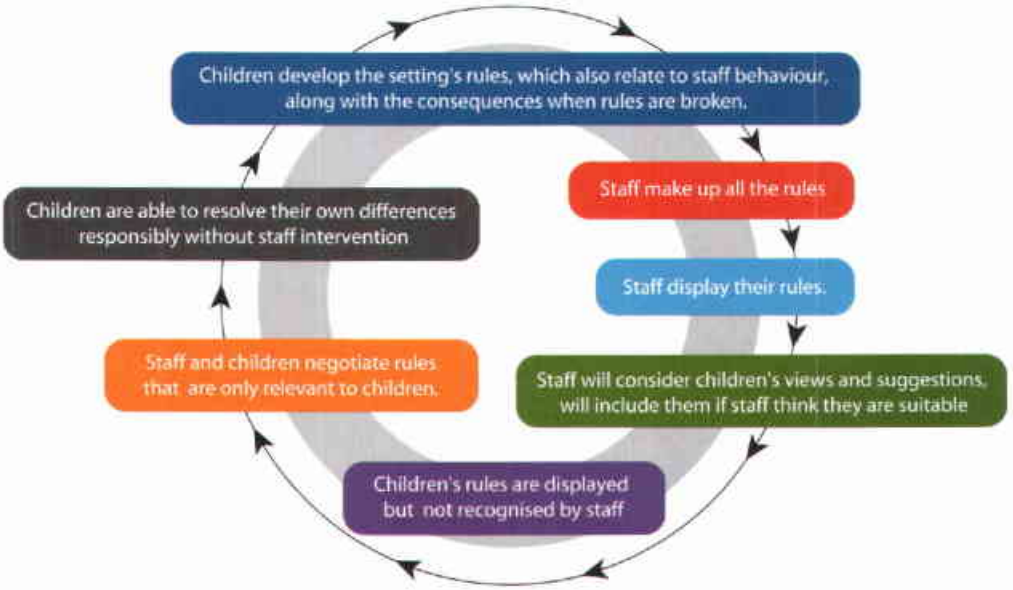
For example, it could be identified that if you run inside the setting when there are lots of activities out, somebody may get hurt. So a natural outcome would be to agree a 'no running inside the club' rule. I would suggest that the next step would be to agree if the rule applied to both children and staff, and to justify the decision.

It is then you come onto the more complex task of identifying any consequences. Obviously we need to make children aware that total exclusion and isolation is not an appropriate consequence of not adhering to rules and that the consequence needs to be suitable. So in the case of a 'do not run' rule being broken, it could be agreed that there is an initial reminder to stop running, with a possible discussion of why running was happening, to being asked to sit still for a few minutes for the runner to think about their actions.

The important thing to remember is that children are more likely to follow the rules and consequences if they have been involved in their development and fully understand them.

"Have you ever asked a five year old what 'respect' means?"

Circle of participation: Rules


Children develop the setting's rules, which also relate to staff behaviour, along with the consequences when rules are broken.
Staff make up all the rules
Staff display their rules.
Staff will consider children's views and suggestions, will include them if staff think they are suitable
Children's rules are displayed but not recognised by staff
Staff and children negotiate rules that are only relevant to children.
Children are able to resolve their own differences responsibly without staff intervention

Equalities in After School Clubs: Making It Real

"Consider a picture book to show newcomers the activities of the club and its staff members."

As playworkers, one of the greatest gifts you can confer on your children is to help them to see others as fellow members of the human race, worthy of receiving respect. Although many people rightly associate equalities with aspects of race, religion and belief, language, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability etc equality is more than the sum of its parts. Fundamentally, it is recognising that everyone has value.

Below are a few suggestions to promote equality.

Helping children to care for themselves and each other: Encourage children to have a strong sense of their own identity. Each one could make a little book about who they are, what they like and what they want to be when they grow up. If writing is not their skill, perhaps a collage or a snappy song. Encourage them to respect each other's ideals and ambitions. If possible, praise children and fellow playworkers for achievement and good effort. The children will learn to appreciate each other by your example.

Prepare for newcomers: Preparing for new arrivals helps the children to develop empathy, using their imagination by putting themselves in the shoes of the newcomer. If you have a child coming who does not speak any English, you might want to ask the group how they will help make the children feel welcome. You could use their suggestions when the child arrives, asking the children to help carry out the suggestions – e.g. making a garland of paper flowers, or a football shaped card. This could be extended to a welcome for anyone new, whether it be a child or a playworker. Consider a picture book to show newcomers the activities of the club and its staff members. Make the club a friendly place by having signs of welcome in different languages, and pictures and dual language signs in strategic locations. Consider assigning each new child a buddy to help give a tour of the club and to be a point of contact for the new child in the first month, or longer.

World Cup 2010: Football is the world's most popular game and clubs could get ready for the World Cup by choosing some national teams, putting up flags, cooking some national food, and learning a few words of the language. Ideas and links to the World Cup anthem can be found in the latest ENCO newsletter at http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/parents/childcare/Equalities.htm

Tea party: Gather everyone for a picnic with food and snacks to enjoy the summer weather. You could make a jug of iced tea or iced coffee for the children to try. Alternatively, you could let the children make their own orange juice, lemonade or milk shake. Involve the children in making dainty sandwiches and slices of fruit. If you like, you could invite carers, parents and grandparents. Bring any beloved toys, e.g. teddy bears, and take a group photo. Never mind if it rains, you could still have a pretend picnic indoors on a large rug, all snug inside.

Parents as your best resource: Engage all parents to send in interesting items for your setting. These could be souvenirs from holidays. As it is a children's club, it would be fun to ask them to look for children's things when they go on holiday, like child-sized slippers, clothing and toys. For example, in Italy there are small wooden souvenirs of Pinocchio. These, with a small pack of postcards, could be the start of a small corner on Italy. If parents are willing to read, share a song or a skill, they can be encouraged to come for a session, for example, a lorry driver could tell the children about his articulated lorry and the routes he takes across Europe!

For more ideas contact the Equalities Team on 01954 273339 for suggestions or support.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Congratulations

The Old School House Day Nursery, Stetchworth has been recognised for its commitment to staff health and wellbeing by achieving the Investors in People Health and Wellbeing at Work Good Practice Award. The photo shows the nursery receiving a certificate at a special awards ceremony in London.

"The central book collection... has now been relocated throughout the county's libraries."

Library Service to Early Years Groups and Childminders (Formerly Known as The Under Fives Library Service)

There have been changes to the delivery of the book loan service to pre-school groups and childminders. The central book collection previously located at Broad Lane in Cottenham has now been relocated throughout the county's libraries and books may be selected by early years groups from library shelves.

Registered early years groups and childminders are entitled to a library card, which allows them to borrow up to 25 books from their local library. All groups who were registered as members of the former Under Fives Library Service will already have a valid membership card which will be retained by their nearest library. Any new groups/childminders who wish to join the service may do so by completing a simple joining form. Proof of address needs to be provided by the childminder or the group guarantor.

Books are loaned out in sturdy black boxes, but if these prove awkward and unwieldy, groups and childminders can use their own bags. The loan period for books is 16 weeks and no overdue charges are levied. A printed list of all items borrowed will be issued.

If any groups wish to take children along with them to select the books, we are very happy to oblige as this is a really good experience for the children. However, do please give us a few days' advance notice of the visit.

Remember...this is a free service. We have thousands of wonderful board and picture books, simple information books and nursery rhyme collections for you to enjoy with your children. We also have a collection of storysacks for loan.

We look forward to seeing you.

For further information, please contact your nearest library or e-mail Richard.young@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Early Years Foundation Stage

Early Years Philosophies in Focus

"Adults support the child through encouragement and being interested in their play and explorations."

In the last two editions of Jigsaw we have looked at the Montessori and Steiner Waldorf approaches to early years education. The next article continues our series examining a range of philosophies, what they mean for children's learning and how they relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

The High Scope Approach

This approach to learning in the early years was developed in the 1960's by David Weikart who worked in the state of Michigan, USA. He was concerned by the underachievement of children from poor neighbourhoods. He worked with a team of advisers to develop a programme for "at risk" children and their goals were to prepare preschool aged children for future success in schools. It has since been used with all children in the US and in many countries around the world as it has been shown to be a high quality early years programme that leads to success in school and life.

In 1995 David Weikart said...

"In the High Scope approach to early childhood education adults and children share control. We recognize that the power to learn resides in the child, hence the focus on active learning practices. When we accept that learning comes from within, we achieve a critical balance in educating young children. The adults' role is to support and guide young children through their active learning adventures and experiences. I believe this is what makes our programme work so well"

What are the main elements of the approach?

Active learning is central to the approach, with children given opportunities to take initiative, based on the belief that children have a natural drive to explore and make sense of their world.

Adult – child interaction is essential, where adults have authentic relationships and **share control with children**. Adults support the child through encouragement and being interested in their play and explorations. Adults adopt **a problem solving approach to conflict** as they enable children to become increasingly confident and have the language to solve their own problems.

Planned learning environment - where there are specific areas for certain types of play and activity e.g. role play, block play, creative area. In each area the materials are organised and stored so that children can access them independently during play. There is a range of natural, recycled and commercial resources.

A planned daily routine which has a time when children can **plan – do and review** their play/ activity, a **small group time** and a **large group time**. The plan – do – review cycle enables children to plan and articulate their ideas and the 'doing' is active, followed by a review with an adult of what happened during the 'doing' time. The small group time would enable children to experience a new resource or area that they are not familiar with, or can be an experience that is planned by the adult based on observations of a child's interests / needs. The large group time would often include music and movement. **Greeting time and outside time** are also important daily elements.

Assessment is part of the daily cycle of observing children during their play and through interactions with them. Adults make daily anecdotal notes of what they see and hear and this is shared with all the adults who work with the children to plan further experiences. The adults relate their observations to key experiences, now called key development indicators to show their development.

In High Scope settings the **partnership with parents** is also highly valued and home visits are carried out with every family. This is a time for the adult to start the close relationship with the child and family. Children can also share their interests at home with the adult. Children will get to know their early years worker well during their time at pre-school and the home visit is seen as an essential.

You will notice that there are many similarities between the central elements of the High Scope approach and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The High Scope Approach...continued

You can see the themes and commitments of the EYFS represented in the approach.

The High Scope approach was originally developed for pre-school aged children of 3-5 years, but the High Scope Research foundation that was established in 1970 by David Weikart has continued to develop practice and has since developed early year's programmes for 0-3's. For more information you can look on their website.

http://www.highscope.org

In 'Educating Young Children' (1995), a detailed handbook to the approach, the authors Mary Holman and David Weikart say:

"The High Scope approach works because it empowers children to follow through on their interests purposefully and creatively. In the process children develop initiative, interest, curiosity, resourcefulness, independence and responsibility - habits of mind that will serve them well throughout their lives."

The High Scope approach can sit comfortably within the Early Years Foundation Stage and many settings use the programme to organise their practice.

"Attending the course and the implementation of the art trolley has proved to be a very positive and rewarding experience."

I hear, I know – I see, I remember – I do, I understand (Confucius – Ancient Chinese Philosopher)

Jenny Larner from Isleham Pre-school attended a CINDLE (Cambridgeshire Independent Learning) course which examined how early years practitioners can develop their understanding of children as independent or self regulated learners. Here she describes how she has used this learning in her setting.

"I attended the CINDLE – Promoting Independent Learning course in the spring of 2009. This was a course held one afternoon a week over a period of three weeks and I would have been happy if it had continued for another three weeks.

The course focused on how children learn through doing, and the vital role adults and resources play in this by providing children with opportunities to make choices and encouraging the ability to think for themselves.

The saying 'I do, I understand' is always in my mind when planning activities and observing children in their play and all staff in our setting had been aware for some time of the need to give children the freedom to access modelling materials and different mark making media. However with our limited space and high cupboard tops it wasn't always possible but after attending the Independent Learning course, I left with a clear mission in mind and this was to secure funds for the purchase of one art trolley.

The three tier wooden trolley soon arrived and it was an immediate success. Children know they can access scissors, boxes, tubes, pens etc. whenever they feel the urge to create. As the trolley is always and easily accessible, we have observed some children are more inclined to use the various art materials, where before they were hesitant.

Attending the course and implementing the art trolley has proved to be a very positive and rewarding experience and when funds allow, we plan to purchase another trolley for all our various Knowledge and Understanding materials and artefacts."

If you would like to develop more independent learning in your setting, talk to your local authority adviser.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Every Child A Talker (ECAT)

"The emphasis of ECAT is developing spoken language – both understanding and using it."

"... one of the best things we can do with young children is to have interesting and enjoyable conversations with them" – Michael Rosen Children's Laureate.

ICAN research in 2006 showed that around 10% of children have persistent communication difficulties and upwards of 50% have transient difficulties that can be alleviated with the right support. Dickinson and Tabor (2001) found that in free play activities four year old children spent 17% of their time talking with adults, 18% of their time talking to peers and 59% not talking at all.

Every Child a Talker (ECAT) is a government initiative designed to encourage and develop early years language skills. Findings from the Communication, Language and Literacy programme have shown that focused projects have significant impact on children's achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. The emphasis of ECAT is developing spoken language – both understanding and using it. There are three main strands: developing the skills of early years staff, supporting children, and engaging parents.

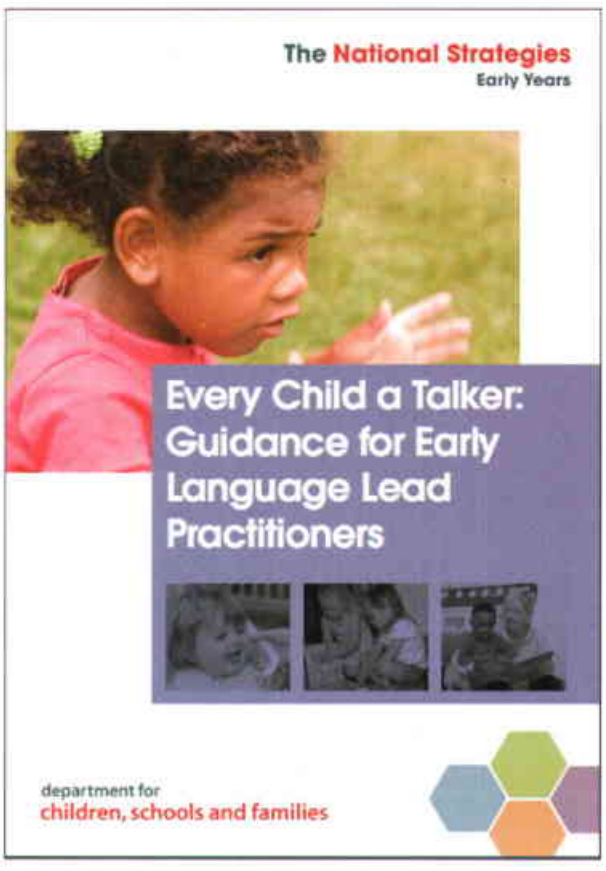
Each Local Authority (LA) has been asked to select a minimum of 20 settings. Within the setting a member of staff is chosen to be the Early Language Lead Practitioner (ELLP). The ELLPs receive training and support from an Early Language Consultant (ELC), to improve practice and then support other staff members to develop their skills. The ELLPs will also be tasked to support one other setting in their area to provide a ripple effect of information.

On 6 May a launch event was held at Hinchingbrooke Country Park. Nancy Stewart, Senior Adviser from the National Strategies, provided background information and Gill Harrison, Head of Early Years and Childcare, discussed the local situation. Settings that had been invited to participate in the project attended. The event was very successful and there was great interest in the principles and practice of ECAT.

Cambridgeshire County Council appointed their Early Language Consultants in March 2010. They are Anne Crick and Leah Moors. Anne has worked for the LA for about 30 years as a teacher and as an adviser and team leader for the last six years. Leah has been a speech and language therapist for 11 years working in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. They will each be working for three days a week and the project will run until March 2011.

Anne and Leah will be running an accredited ELKLAN course called 'Speech and Language Support for the Under 5s' for the ELLPs in September 2010. This will provide in-depth information about speech and language development and how to support children who are having difficulties. They will also be visiting the targeted settings to develop language rich environments and ensure that children are receiving the best possible support in language and communication.

The project has built-in audit measures and data will be collected over the next year. A further report will be written at the end of the project to inform people of the impact ECAT has had in the local area.


The National Strategies
Early Years
Every Child a Talker: Guidance for Early Language Lead Practitioners
department for
children, schools and families

Childcare Information Service

Cambridgeshire's Childcare Information Service (CIS) is part of the Families Information Service (FIS)

Vital Statistics

From January to April this year the CIS responded to 2596 calls and emails - of these 51% were from providers and 49% were from the public – we aren't just here to provide information for parents and carers - we are a service for you too, whether it's advertising jobs, childcare vacancies or answering any queries you may have – please get in contact.

We've welcomed some new members to the team here in Histon and are now up to full strength as a service – here's a brief who's who:

- Information Advice and Guidance Services Development Manager - Kate Warboys
- Information Manager - Sian Franklin
- Information Coordinator - Angela Win
- Childcare Brokerage Officer for Cambridgeshire - Sarah Channell
- Family Information Project Officers - Jade Van-Loo and Gareth Waldock
- Operations Coordinator Peterborough FIS - Katie Gosling
- Information Advisors - Andree O'Sullivan and Nicola Foy
- Administrator - Teresa Rodriguez

All email addresses follow the format firstname.lastname@opportunitylinks.co.uk and we can be reached on our main number of 0845 04 54 014

"We aren't just here to provide information for parents and carers – we are a service for you too."

Sufficiency Survey – Thank You

Thanks to all those who have responded to this term's survey – next term's will be between 13 and 17 September, and we'd like to see even more responses!

We can't emphasise enough how important it is that we receive this information – it is used to underpin the next three years' Sufficiency Assessment and informs decisions made that will affect your business in the future.

There are three ways to submit your information:

- http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/86BQMJS
- email info@opplinks.org.uk
- ring Jade on 0845 04 54 014

New Website - www.familiesandchildcare.org.uk

Our new website is expanding – we've had some very positive feedback on it, including how much easier it is to search for childcare than on direct.gov! We are working hard to keep the information up to date and relevant. We are consulting with parents this month to gain their input.

New pages to be added shortly will include:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Outreach events listings – find out where you can meet us face to face
- Ofsted and the three registers
- Useful publications page.

Early Education Funding – How Will You Implement the Change?

As you will be aware, from September 2010 the free and flexible early learning and childcare offer (NEF) will increase from 12.5 to 15 hours per week, countywide. Parents will also see an increase to the choice and pattern of attendance for their child, with most settings providing a more flexible offer.

Can you let us know how you are going to implement this in your setting? How flexible are you going to be? Please give us a call and let us know so we can keep your records up to date for parents and carers – **0845 04 05 014**.

Finally, if you are planning on joining in the fun at Cambridge's Big Weekend on Saturday 10 July we will be hosting a stall on Parker's Piece. Come along and meet the CIS team!

Diary dates...

July 2010

Thurs 22 **End of school summer term**

August 2010

Wed 4 **National Playday/The Big Day Out on the theme of 'Our Place' (Venue: Earith Primary School)**...see page 22

Sept 2010

Thurs 2 **School autumn term opens**

Tues 21 **EYCC Training Centre Open Days**

Wed 22 ...see page 12 for further details

Oct 2010

Mon 25 **School half-term break**

Fri 29

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If you would like support to access the content of this document, please call 01954 273360 or email: eycinfo@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

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PRE SCHOOL LEARNING ALLIANCE

Issue 35 July 2010
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